



CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD

Meeting Minutes #707

December 7, 2007



Chairman Vernon Chong
Randal Bressette, Vice Chairman
Tom Moran, Board Member

Jake I. Alarid, Board Member
Alice Astafan, Board Member
Colin Shadell, Board Member

The California Veterans Board met at the Yountville Veterans Home in Yountville, California at 9:00 AM.

ROLL CALL

Present: Vernon Chong, Chairman, Randal Bressette, Vice-Chairman, Member, Alice Astafan, Member, Thomas Moran, Member, Colin Shadell, Member, Jake Alarid, Member
Chairman Chong presided

OPENING CEREMONIES

- A) INVOCATION**
- B) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

WELCOMING REMARKS/INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman Chong welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the meeting. The Chairman then introduced the members of the Board and provided background on each Board member. He then introduced the Secretary of the California Department of Veterans Affairs, Thomas Johnson.

Secretary Johnson welcomed the group and introduced his staff, Deputy Secretary Veterans Services John King, Chief Legal Counsel Rob Wilson, Deputy Secretary of Communications, J.P. Tremblay, Human Resources Chief, Danette Baker, Hospital Administrator, Marcella McCormack.

MINUTES

Executive Officer, Bonnie Kelly

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the minutes of the previous meeting held October 18, 2007. Board member Bressette moved to approve the October 18, 2007 minutes. Board member Astafan seconded.
Motion unanimously approved and carried.

J.P. Tremblay read and presented a proclamation commemorating Pearl Harbor Day by the Governor to Marcella McCormack to present to the Yountville Pearl Harbor Survivors Chapter.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ben Franklin
Shirley Coen

OLD BUSINESS

A. Proposed 2008 Meeting Schedule

The Board discussed the 2008 meeting schedule. Member Bressette moved to approve the schedule as presented with the dates of the February meeting in Barstow being February 7-8 and the Bakersfield meeting dates of April 17-18. Member Alarid seconded the motion. Motion unanimously approved and carried.

B. Resolution on Veterans Mandatory Healthcare Funding

Chairman Chong advised that letters have been sent to President Bush and the Congress in support of this Resolution. The Board will take a formal vote of support at the February meeting when the initiative is officially on the ballot.

DEPARTMENT FORUM

A. Department Update

Secretary Johnson updated the Board on the hearing before Assemblywoman Salas, Chair of the Committee on Veterans Affairs regarding the under-funded Chula Vista budget, which was also the subject of a review by the Office of State Auditing and Evaluations for Finance. The final report has been received and there will be an augmented budget.

The Secretary advised that the Joint Legislative Audit Committee is currently auditing Yountville and will be finished in February or March.

The most challenging budget for the State will be next year's budget due to a projected \$10 Billion Dollar deficit and all departments will be asked to look carefully at their budgets. The Governor will release the budget on January 10.

On legislation, SB 599 the Mexican American Veterans Memorial was passed. There is \$203,000 for this memorial. A seven person commission will be formed, five chosen by our Department and two by the Legislature, to ensure this project moves forward.

Significant Developments:

Our first full time person, a Chief of Plant Operations has been hired for GLAVC and the Administrator will be on board in January. They will be located at an office in Van Nuys where there is space available for eleven people. This office will cover the Lancaster, Ventura and W. Los Angeles homes.

Redding has formed a Northern California Veterans Home Advisory Committee, Chaired by Linda Hartman who is on the Board of Supervisors for Shasta County. This group will help to keep the channels of communication open.

The Department just sold \$100,000,000 in bonds in New York. \$50M will be refinance money and \$50M will be new money. Also, \$91.2 M of additional bonds were issued, which is mostly refinance dollars to lower our interest rates.

The Department of General Services staff visited the Barstow Home on November 28 to

assess preparation plans for the opening of the skilled nursing facility. The visit went well and we are on schedule for the opening, which will probably be in January or February.

At the request of the Board, John King gave a presentation on the issues of homeless Veterans, and the Department's outreach efforts in this area.

C. Significant Legal Matters

Report submitted.

NEW BUSINESS

Representatives from The Military Order of the Purple Heart presented a check for \$6,000 to the Yountville Veterans Home to Pearl Harbor survivor Ivan Brooks. The money will be used to purchase a detachable moving device for wheel chairs at the new member center, and the remainder will go to the general fund of Yountville.

A) Haun Appeal Assignment

The appeal was deemed received and assigned to Member Tom Moran.

B) Veterans Preference Points

Mike Strazzo, a representative from the California State Personnel Board, explained preference points. These are points added to the final score of any veteran taking an exam for a state job. Several state agencies have raised the issue of whether the current method of earning these points is legally permissible. There will be a future public hearing by the Personnel Board to discuss the findings and input received on this issue.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

XI. COMMENTS BY BOARD MEMBERS

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 12:00 NOON